Types of usb cables chart

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Types of USB Cables Distinguished by Connectors

Initially developed in the 1990s as a standardized method of connecting computers with keyboards, displays, and other peripherals, Universal Serial Bus (USB) cables have transformed how electronic devices exchange power and data. USB simplifies and streamlines connections between a wide range of devices and is a necessary component of many tools we use daily.

Today, there are several USB connector types, each of which is further classified according to its power specifications. In this guide, we’ll discuss the most common types of USB connectors and the key selection considerations to help you identify the right product for your needs.

Modern USB cables facilitate data communication and power delivery and are significantly faster than previous generations. However, they also come in multiple connection types, which are largely incompatible with one another. This makes it essential to identify the right USB type for your device’s port. Below, you can learn more about the different types of USB connectors.

Widely regarded as the standard connector type, USB Type-A connectors are very common. They feature a flat, rectangular interface that joins directly to host devices, held in place using friction. A-Type connectors are durable enough to establish continuous connections but also user-friendly enough to be easily connected and disconnected. In most cases, IT peripherals have a USB Type-A connector that plugs into a PC. USB A-Type is also available in micro variations.

USB Type-B connectors have traditionally been used with printer cables but are now more commonly used in cell phones and other peripheral devices like external hard drives. They feature a square interface and are available in several types:

Developed in the early 2000s, the USB mini-B features a slim profile and a snug fit. While it was initially used in early smartphones, digital cameras, and GPS navigation systems, it is less popular today due to the rise of micro USB technology.

As a very small 5-pin connector, the micro USB connector type is commonly used with small electronics like smartphones, game controllers, and power banks. USB micro-B is also widely used in Android smartphones that lack a USB-C receptacle.

The newest type of connector, USB C-Type provides a one-size-fits-all solution for replacing older, larger USBs. It features a reversible, symmetrical interface and a sleek, slim design. It can also be adapted to support legacy connectors.

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In addition to being categorized by type, USBs are further classified according to their power specifications. Each new version offers increased bandwidth and compatibility with an even broader range of devices and applications.

While now obsolete, the USB 1.1 was the first widely used consumer USB. It enabled a maximum bandwidth of 12 Mpbs and was compatible with basic devices, like computer mice and keyboards.

Also known as the high-speed USB, version 2.0 improved the bandwidth to 480 Mbps. This upgrade allows it to be used for higher bandwidth devices, such as transfer cables, adapters, and mass storage equipment. USB 2.0 also features backward compatibility with USB 1.1 devices.

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